



Mimicking state diplomacy: The legitimizing strategies of unofficial diplomacies

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ABSTRACT

Diplomacy and recognition play central roles in the conventional conferral of state legitimacy and functioning of the inter-state system. In broadening the diplomatic frame by stepping outside the conventional state-system, this paper brings a poststructuralist and performative toolkit to mimetic diplomatic practices. Adapting Bhabha's notion of mimicry to diplomatic discourse, it demonstrates how non-state diplomacies draw on, mimic and intervene in the realm of formal political action in ways which both promote 'official' state diplomacy as an ideal and dilute its distinction from other, 'unofficial' diplomacies. In thereby examining the enactment of international diplomacy in unexpected spaces, this paper brings together three empirical studies: a Government-in-Exile, a religious community and micropatrias (self-declared parodic nations). In each of these cases, attention focuses on: discourses of recognition; sovereignty and legitimacy; the diplomatic relationships fostered and institutions of diplomacy constructed; and the strategic position of such diplomacy vis-à-vis the conventional state-system. Unpacking the relationship between legitimacy, recognition and diplomacy and exploring the tension between state-centric and non-state diplomatic practices, this paper foregrounds the points of connection between the official and the unofficial. As a result, this paper expands the analytical gaze of diplomacy studies while incorporating lessons from the margins into our understandings of legitimacy, recognition, statecraft and sovereignty.

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1. Introduction

Geopolitical events as diverse as the uprisings of the 'Arab Spring', the secession of South Sudan, the formation of the European External Action Service and the WikiLeaks affair foreground the intellectual urgency of issues around international diplomacy. Seen alongside President Obama's rhetorical promotion of international respect and soft power, the norms, discourses and practices of diplomacy have come under increased academic scrutiny (Parmer and Cox, 2010; Sharp, 2009). Taking the European state system as the traditional point of departure (Neumann, *in press*), International Relations (IR) scholarship on diplomacy has traditionally assumed the state to be a 'natural' and bounded container for political activity (Taylor, 1994), and has focused on the efficacy of diplomacy in the purportedly anarchic world of international politics. Thus, while diplomacy is ostensibly for resolving differences among pre-existing states, it is simultaneously a discourse of recognition and authority (re)performed by sovereign states to exclude non-sovereign others. In the popular framing of diplomacy as interactions

among states 'high politics' becomes the exclusive realm of polities that mutually recognize each other as peers.

However, diplomacy can also be considered as any "channel of contact" (Gilboa, 2002, p. 83), and thus be broadened out to encompass practices beyond the stereotypical accoutrements of state formality. These include 'disaster diplomacy' whereby foreign policy relations are enacted through the provision of aid to an erstwhile rival during a time of crisis (Kurizaki, 2007; Regan and Aydin, 2006), the diplomatic role of culture and sport (especially in the contexts of the Cold War and 'war on terror' see Hixson, 1997; Kennedy, 2003; Peppard and Riordan, 1993), and the broader engagement of 'public diplomacy', the communication of policy perspectives directly to foreign populations in order to establish a dialog to inform and influence these audiences (Melissen, 2005; Pinkerton and Dodds, 2009). While certainly a far cry from the world of protocol and ambassadors, these diplomacies maintain the emphasis on enacting foreign policy within the closed society of states.

This paper broadens the diplomatic frame further by stepping outside that society to examine instances of 'unofficial' diplomacy that nevertheless still draw on the discourses and performances of 'official' diplomats, still deal "with the political process on a global level" (Ammon, 2001, p. 8), and still reify the "idea of international society" (Sofer, 2007, p. 36). These 'unofficial' diplomacies

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simultaneously draw on, mimic and intervene in the realm of formal political action in revealing ways. Adapting Bhabha's notion of mimicry to diplomatic discourse, this paper untangles these threads and foregrounds the points of connection and convergence between the official and the unofficial in ways which both promote 'official' state diplomacy as the 'gold standard' to aspire to, and unsettle it by reducing the gap between the 'real' and the 'mimic'. As such, the paper broadens the analytical gaze of diplomacy studies while incorporating lessons from the margins into our understandings of conventional topics such as recognition, legitimacy and sovereignty.

We begin by reviewing diplomacy, with a focus on different theoretical and disciplinary approaches to the topic and recent scholarship on soft power, public diplomacy and non-state actors' paradiplomacy. We then demonstrate the utility of Bhabha's theorization of mimicry in approaching the diplomacy of non-state actors. To address the research lacuna of formal diplomacy on the margins of the state system, we outline three case studies, each drawn from our broader research projects.¹ The first is the diplomatic practices of the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (McConnell) through which this unrecognized polity seeks to construct legitimacy and enact a degree of 'stateness', defined as the social relations and mundane practices that give rise to state effects (Painter, 2006). The second is the International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem (Dittmer), an institutionalized representative of Christian Zionism which strives to intervene in 'high politics' despite not aspiring to sovereignty itself. The final case study is the diplomacy of micropatrias (Moreau) which, in the absence of traditional recognition, recognize each other and form international institutions to promote shared aims, thus producing stand-alone, parallel international communities. Juxtaposing these case studies enables us to consider the tactical use of diplomatic discourse by non-state groups to subvert the international system and contest its exclusions. Yet, at the same time, these non-state actors leave the international system itself intact. In conclusion we argue that such 'unofficial' diplomacies are, somewhat paradoxically, important to the hegemony of 'formal' diplomacy and we foreground the role of mimicry in producing diplomacy from the margins as a serious topic. Finally, some possible directions for future research are offered.

2. Diplomacy of and beyond the state

In its narrowest sense, diplomatic theory is an "applied body of knowledge pertaining to the right conduct of professional diplomats in their relations with one another" (Sharp, 2009, p. 7), with Satow's (1922) and Berridge's (2002) guides to diplomatic practice epitomizing this approach. Broadly speaking, the theorization of diplomacy has largely occurred within IR and, reflecting disciplinary debates, IR scholars have conventionally studied diplomacy in the context of the realist/idealist divide. Realists theorize diplomacy as another form of force to be brought to bear in the national interest, albeit a more palatable one (Kissinger, 1995; Langer, 1951), while idealists see diplomacy as a tool capable of resolving conflicts and producing a less violent world order (Diamond and McDonald, 1996; McRae and Hubbart, 2001). Meanwhile, discussions around diplomacy within international law focus on the legal structures that facilitate these state-to-state exchanges theorized by IR scholars (Bassiouni, 1980; McClanahan, 1989). The most comprehensive account of diplomacy from the perspective of political geography, by van der Wusten and Mamadouh (2010, p. 1), itself argues that "the geography of diplomacy is not a familiar sign

under which scholars congregate like diplomatic history." While nuanced and influential work within political geography has deconstructed the discourses of foreign policy (Dodds, 1993; Ó Tuathail and Agnew, 1992), attended to the role of diplomacy in imperial geopolitics (Kearns, 2009) and examined the agency of geopolitical elites (Kuus, 2008; Müller, 2008), there is something of a dearth of geographical research that attends to the practices and legitimizing role of diplomacy *per se*. Exceptions include quantitative studies of diplomatic connections (Neumayer, 2008; van der Wusten and van Korstanje, 1991), systematic reviews of the location of diplomacy (Henrikson, 2005) and case studies of particular diplomatic contexts and negotiations (e.g. Campbell, 1999; Chaturvedi, 1998; Dahlman and Ó Tuathail, 2006; Newman, 2002).

While such work maintains a state-centered focus on formal diplomacy, two trends have diverged from this literature in recent years and are central to the theoretical framing of this paper. These are (1) an increasing focus on different modes of diplomacy drawing on ideas of soft power and the theorization of public diplomacy and (2) a broadening of the type of actor engaged in diplomatic practices to include non-state polities. Nye (2006, p. 26) differentiates the sovereign performances of power: "Hard power, the ability to coerce, grows out of a country's military and economic might. Soft power arises from the attractiveness of a country's culture, political ideals, and policies." Perceived as a key lever of soft power, and seeing a revival in the post-9/11 era when links were made between international perceptions of the United States and the country's national security (Ross, 2002), public diplomacy is conceptualized as based on "a complex relationship between three major components: the government, the media, and public opinion" (Gilboa, 2008, p. 62. See also Melissen, 2005; Mor, 2006). Given the consequent foregrounding of the diplomatic role of culture (Finn, 2003; Kennedy, 2003) and the idea of 'nation branding' (Olins, 2005), scholarship on public diplomacy has been highly multidisciplinary, including contributions from IR, cultural studies, sociology, psychology and public relations.

Even as work on public diplomacy remains generally state-centric, its broad remit means that it offers the potential to open up space for non-sovereign polities to get a foot in the door (Mattern, 2005). As such, attention has increasingly focused on non-state actors such as the intervention of NGOs in formal diplomacy to promote conflict resolution and foster intergovernmental decision-making on environmental issues (Betsill and Corell, 2008), the role of corporate diplomacy that requires state-corporate interaction with regards to management, trade and international relations (Strange, 1992) and the institutionalization of indigenous communities' engagement with diplomacy (Beier, 2010; Epp, 2001). While instructive on issues of agency, international lobbying and the blurring of diplomatic boundaries, the cases under consideration here are distinct from NGOs, corporations and indigenous communities in their mimicking of aspects of stateness. Perhaps a closer fit is work on paradiplomacy, understood as the foreign policy capacity of sub-national, regional or local governments (Aldecoa and Keating, 1999; Duchacek et al., 1988). With empirical attention focused on the international relations of regional governments in Europe and North America (e.g. Basque Country, Scotland, Quebec), this form of diplomacy is interpreted as "more functionally specific and targeted" than conventional state diplomacy, and often opportunistic and experimental (Keating, 1999, p. 11).

Emerging from this literature has been a valuable focus on the inter- and intra-diplomacy of non-central governments (Shain, 1989) and a foregrounding of how this diplomacy renders "the understanding of actorness at once important but increasingly difficult" (Hocking, 1999, p. 36) and fundamentally transgresses the national/international, domestic/foreign binaries which have been so central to conventional IR theorisations (Walker, 1993). However, while such observations offer an important insight into

¹ These diplomacies are formal in that they are rooted in the rituals and language of traditional state-based diplomacy, rather than being simply about communication in a generic sense (as with public diplomacy).

the paradigm-shifting role that non-state actors can play, in general, scholarship on paradiplomacy has been descriptive rather than analytical, focusing on detailing strategies employed and limitations faced. As such, these scholars rarely question the legitimating work that diplomacy accomplishes or attend to the performative aspects of diplomatic practices. In order to engage with what is, we argue, a productive line of investigation, it is fruitful to turn to critical approaches to diplomacy.

Impelled by what he saw as a theoretical lacuna in the history of diplomacy as simply an applied practice, Der Derian (1987) was one of the first to use social theory to trace the genealogy of Western diplomacy and explore its 'essence' as a means of mediating estrangement. Building on this post-classical analysis, Neumann (2002, 2007) and Constantinou (1996, 2006) draw on poststructuralist perspectives to explore the role of discourse and practice in diplomacy, with the latter asserting that diplomacy should be understood as "an ensemble of practices, power struggles, and truth contestations that develop into a dominant discourse for dealing with the other" (1996, p. 110). In addition to deconstructing the practice of diplomacy, these scholars also turn critical attention to diplomats themselves and foreground the interpersonal relations, personality traits and experiential dimensions of diplomacy (Neumann, 2005; Constantinou, 2006). Speaking to shifts in state theory which emphasize that states (and their assumed sovereignties) are themselves effects produced through discourse and performance (Weber, 1998), these poststructuralist approaches to diplomacy therefore call into question the processes of mutual recognition that diplomacy enables and take diplomacy to be productive of geopolitical space. This paper marries these post-structuralist approaches to diplomacy with possibilities for formal diplomatic practices at the margins of and even beyond the inter-state system. With such theoretical approaches opening up conceptual space in which it is possible to consider legitimacy as historically contingent and socially constructed, our aim is to begin to unpack the relationship between legitimacy, recognition and diplomacy and to examine the tension between formal diplomatic practices and non-state actors. Such scholarship also speaks to trends in political geography towards a focus on practices (Springer, 2011), embodiment (Mountz, 2004) and the role of geopolitical actors (Kuus, 2008), but from an empirical viewpoint which has, to date, often been overlooked.

We do this by adapting Bhabha's notion of mimicry to diplomatic discourse. Bhabha defines mimicry as "the desire for a reformed, recognizable Other, as a *subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite*," (1984, p. 126, emphasis in original). In his original formulation, Bhabha was addressing the identity practices of empire. Part of the "white man's burden" was the expectation of reforming the colonial Other as a subject of modernity. Nevertheless, imperial power relations were based on a radical difference between colonizer and colonized; the (perceived) successful remaking of the colonial subject undercut the difference that was required to maintain the status quo. Therefore, colonial mimicry (that is, the strategic adoption of metropolitan manners and practices) necessitated the emergence of new discourses of unalienable difference (often racial). This may seem distant from the concerns of diplomacy, but when one considers the European origins of the state system and the practices that form its diplomacy, it is clear that participation in that diplomacy by postcolonial states and non-state polities can be read as a form of mimicry. As we demonstrate below, the diplomacy of state-like non-state actors can be understood as mimicry of a colonial (and colonizing) discourse of legitimacy; the mimicry can approach its referent asymptotically but never match it, never gaining full recognition as equal:

It is as if the very emergence of the "colonial" is dependent for its representation upon some strategic limitation or prohibition

within the authoritative discourse itself. The success of colonial appropriation depends on a proliferation of inappropriate objects that ensure its strategic failure, so that mimicry is at once resemblance and menace. (Bhabha, 1984, p. 127)

In other words, mimicry is political in that it reinforces colonial (here, diplomatic) legitimacy by elevating it; 'official', Eurocentric practices of diplomacy become the norm to which others conform (Neumann, *in press*). However, paradoxically, mimicry undercuts that elevation by closing down the distinction between the authority and the mimic upon which political legitimacy rests. This distinction always remains inversely proportional to the mockery that locates the mimic as subordinate.

The following three case studies illustrate the variety of mimics available to non-state actors, from loose mimicry that adopts some of diplomacy's trappings, to claims of diplomatic equivalence that deny any excess whatsoever. These unofficial diplomacies can be understood to bolster diplomatic discourse and its state system as well as subvert or undermine it through sheer 'representational force' (Mattern, 2005). They are, simultaneously, both 'resemblance and menace' in that they both elevate 'official' state diplomacy as ideal and dilute its distinction from other, 'unofficial' diplomacies.

3. Tibetan diplomacy in exile

In April 1960 the Dalai Lama re-established the Tibetan Government in the North Indian hill-station of Dharamsala with the twin task of restoring freedom in Tibet and rehabilitating Tibetan refugees. Despite remaining internationally unrecognized, having limited juridical powers and lacking jurisdiction over territory, the exiled Tibetan community has, over the decades, institutionalized the Tibetan Government-in-Exile (TGiE) which now enacts a range of state-like functions (McConnell, 2009). As with other aspirant governments seeking to position themselves within the international sphere, cultivating relations with other governments and intergovernmental organizations forms a core part of TGiE's remit and activities. In examining such attempts to engage with the international community in the absence of legal recognition, Reisman (1991) argues Governments-in-Exile appropriate symbols of legitimacy in order to maintain their governmental claims, with the "language of stateness" (Hansen and Stepputat, 2001, p. 9) being particularly important as they negotiate their place on the international stage. In the case of TGiE, this polity attempts to mimic (external) legitimacy and sovereignty through discourses of good governance and a range of diplomatic practices. Given the exile government's lack of legal status, it is logical to expect that this polity engages only with informal aspects of public diplomacy, which are in turn enhanced by the strong 'national brand' (Ham, 2001) of the Dalai Lama, Tibetan Buddhism and romanticized images of Shangri-la. However, as outlined here, TGiE also seeks to create and maintain an international persona through mimicry of more traditional and 'official' diplomatic practices. These include the Dalai Lama's formal meetings with state leaders, TGiE's engagement with legislators from various states and the administration of a series of pseudo-embassies.²

The role of external affairs and diplomatic relations was considered to be of utmost importance to the TGiE in the early years of exile as, without the coercive power and military capabilities inherent to 'hard power', alongside a Buddhist commitment to non-violence and principles of compassion and cooperation, this

² This research is based on in-depth interviews with TGiE officials, the Representative of the Dalai Lama at the Bureau of Tibet, New Delhi and Office of Tibet, London, and a number of Tibetan MPs in 2006–2008. Participant observation was also undertaken at the Fourth World Parliamentarians' Convention in Edinburgh, 2005, and during visits of Tibetan parliamentarians to Westminster in 2007 and 2009.

exile administration has turned exclusively to leverages of ‘soft power’ (Nye, 2006; Office of Dalai Lama, 1969). In keeping with the state-like bureaucratized structure of TGiE, exile international affairs are handled by the ‘Department for Information and International Relations’ (DIIR). Occupying a prominent position within the TGiE complex in Dharamsala, this department has its origins in the *chisee khang* (Foreign Relations Office) which was re-established in exile in 1959. With growing demand from the international community for information on Tibet in the 1970s and 1980s, the *chisee khang* was amalgamated with the ‘Information and Publicity Office’ which had been established in 1971. The role of the latter reads like a checklist of conventional public diplomacy activities. These include liaising with international media and Tibet Support Groups across the world, maintaining the exile government’s website (www.tibet.net) and providing information on the human rights, political and environmental conditions in Tibet through a series of publications. This is coordinated by a ‘UN and EU desk’ which provides information on human rights in Tibet to these organizations and a ‘Chinese desk’ which provides outreach to Chinese citizens by translating and disseminating information on a dedicated website.

In addition to these public diplomacy roles, DIIR also engages in more traditional and formal modes of diplomacy. At ‘home’, the Department serves as a protocol office of TGiE, extending official reception to diplomats, government officials, journalists and NGO officials visiting Dharamsala, and arranging visits to Tibetan cultural, religious and educational institutions and meetings with TGiE officials. Moreover, through the DIIR, the exile government maintains unofficial foreign missions, known as ‘Offices of Tibet’, in eleven cities across all continents: New Delhi, Kathmandu, Geneva, New York, Tokyo, London, Brussels, Moscow, Canberra, Pretoria and Taipei. Although their diplomatic activities are restricted due to TGiE’s lack of legal recognition, they nonetheless maintain direct contacts with governments and parliamentarians and spearhead the administration’s UN initiatives. The Offices’ embassy-like functions also include acting as a channel of news from Tibet, facilitating the exchange of information between organizations concerned with the Tibet issue and coordinating the Dalai Lama’s official visits. In addition to these general functions, and in light of limited funds, each office was established with a clear goal in mind. First to be established, the Bureau in New Delhi is key to liaising with the ministries of TGiE’s host state India, interacting with other embassies in the city and processing identity documents for Tibetans leaving and re-entering India.³ As part of an early effort to internationalize the Tibetan issue, the New York Office was originally established to lobby the UN and now also serves as the focal point for the increasing number of Tibetans settled in North America. Meanwhile, the Kathmandu Office looks after the needs of recent refugees from Tibet, while the Offices in London, Tokyo and Canberra reflect both the growing Tibetan diaspora and TGiE’s desire to engage with states which are politically powerful on the international stage.

Each Office of Tibet is led by a ‘Representative of the Dalai Lama’, a title which facilitates tacit recognition of these individuals as ambassadorial representatives of TGiE from parliamentarians and foreign ministries.⁴ With regards to discrepancies between their official status and unofficial working relationships, the Representative at the Bureau of Tibet in Delhi explained:

³ With its somewhat different history and functioning, the Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in New Delhi is the only ‘foreign mission’ not classified as an ‘Office of Tibet’.

⁴ Although the Dalai Lama announced his retirement from political life in March 2011, has transferred authority to the Tibetan Parliament in Exile and the Kalon Tripa (Prime Minister), and no longer appoints the heads of the Offices of Tibet, these individuals retain the title ‘Representative of the Dalai Lama’ (interviews with TGiE officials, 4–5 October 2011).

... it is diplomacy and international pressure which prevents these governments granting full recognition to us as a government, but at the embassy level they do deal with the Bureau as like an embassy and certainly as the representative of the Dalai Lama and his administration. So in reality the Bureau... we are granted de facto recognition and certainly recognized as having [the] moral authority of the Tibetan people (26 October 2007).

Therefore, while the financial, legal and political limitations of these Offices of Tibet are considerable, their existence and mimicry of formal state-like modes of diplomacy is nevertheless significant. So, for example, although the Office of Tibet in London is merely a set of rooms above an ‘oriental medicine centre’, it flies the Tibetan flag, welcomes visitors and the ‘ambassador’ attends as many governmental functions as he is able. This includes giving briefings to cross-party parliamentary groups, liaising with Indian embassies and consulates regarding exile Tibetan identity documents and meeting with Foreign Ministry staff of states across Northern Europe. Likewise, though DIIR cannot engage in overtly political activities given TGiE’s lack of recognition and fragile relationship with the Indian state, the Department still manages to fulfill a number of conventional ‘foreign ministry’ functions and is the key gatekeeper for TGiE external communications and relations.

Alongside the institutions of DIIR and Offices of Tibet, TGiE employs a number of other strategies in order to establish, manage and negotiate its diplomatic relations (interviews with DIIR officials, 2006–2008). With regards to intra-diplomatic links with other unrecognized polities, its founding membership of the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization (UNPO) is key. A unique organization of over 60 indigenous, minority and occupied peoples not adequately represented at major international forums, UNPO facilitates participation of these polities in the international community through engagement with UN bodies, lobbying the European Parliament and training its members in diplomacy. As such, this functions as a key forum for the professionalization of potential diplomats, such as exile Tibetans, and offers an insight into how diplomatic practices are taught and learned beyond traditional spaces of diplomacy (www.unpo.org).

In fostering relations with recognized states, TGiE has organized a number of parliamentary exchanges in recent years, including, for example, delegations of Tibetan MPs to Westminster to brief parliamentarians and the Foreign Office, and visits of British MPs to Dharamsala, occasions which, as a DIIR official put it, “make these foreign statesmen [sic] realize what we’ve achieved and... in this way they take us as serious and as a government” (3 November 2007). Alongside these exchanges, TGiE has organized a series of World Parliamentarians’ Conventions on Tibet. The first of these conventions was held in New Delhi in 1994 with 69 parliamentarians from 25 countries, and subsequent meetings have been held in 1995 (Vilnius), 1997 (Washington, DC), 2005 (Edinburgh) and most recently 2009 (Rome), where 133 delegates attended from twenty-nine parliaments.⁵ With the objective of fostering international debates on the question of Tibet and garnering support for the Dalai Lama’s ‘Middle Way Approach’ to resolve the Tibet issue, these meetings provide a forum for interaction and future coordination among parliamentarians sympathetic to the Tibetan cause. In terms of outcomes, these conventions have initiated the formation of cross-party groups for Tibet in legislative bodies around the world and defined a plan of action on what parliamentarians can do to seek a resolution to the future of this territory.

Despite strong opposition from the Chinese consulate in Edinburgh and pressure from Chinese embassies on those states

⁵ For details on the World Parliamentarians’ Conventions on Tibet see: <http://tpprc.org/about-wpct.html> and <http://www.tpprc.org/5th-wpct-18-19-november-2009-rome.html>.

with parliamentarians attending, the 2005 convention was an elaborate affair. The hall in a leading Edinburgh hotel was decked out with the national flags of the MPs present – with the snow-lion emblazoned Tibetan flag centre stage – and all parliamentarians were conspicuously treated as equals, including those of the unrecognized Tibetan Parliament-in-Exile. Such mutual recognition was manifest in gift exchanges and terms of address used, and the *Kalon Tripa* (Tibetan Prime Minister) gave the keynote address. As Shain notes, “international forums have become the mecca for many exile groups that face difficulties in generating governmental support and thus search for alternative routes to the global audience” (1989, p. 128) and the overt performance of statehood during this convention confirms the importance of ritualized protocol and the performative aspects of diplomacy and statecraft (Constantinou, 1998).

In summary, turning to why the exile government pursues these costly and time-consuming diplomatic practices, the answer lies in the fact that they arguably constitute a form of recognition, albeit not one acknowledged by realist scholars or, surprisingly, a number of social constructionists. While productively exposing recognition as a historically contingent and non-linear process (Strang, 1996), critical perspectives often still perceive mutual recognition between constituted sovereigns to be the dominant mechanism underpinning state sovereignty (Biersteker and Weber, 1996; Wendt, 1999). In light of this, the case of TGIE offers an important counterexample. Concurring with Shearer’s (1994, p. 129) conundrum that “non-recognition does not necessarily mean non-intercourse with non-recognizing states” this example also takes this further, as the legitimacy derived by TGIE from the multiple forms of often inferred recognition discussed above posits a broader notion of recognition and (external) sovereignty than that offered by such theorists. It challenges their state-centric bias by extending these constructionist arguments to recognition by and of non-state entities.

These mechanisms through which TGIE performs diplomacy can thus be conceived as further confirmation that foreign policy is no longer the exclusive provenance of recognized states, and that procedural *de facto* sovereignty can and should be distinguished from substantive *de jure* sovereignty (Murphy, 1996). Moreover, while sharing a number of characteristics of paradiplomacy (Aldecoa and Keating, 1999; Lecours, 2002), this case extends this model in important ways. For, unlike regional governments, the ability to engage in diplomatic practices is not devolved to TGIE by a central state but is a strategy it enacts of its own volition. As such, these outward-facing performances, practices and discourses are an attempt by TGIE to lend credibility and legitimacy to what is often deemed clandestine and threatening, and implies some measure of international personality. Thus, in seeking to enhance its own legitimacy and political effectiveness, TGIE has made a concerted effort to mimic key statehood symbols which can be seen to be an iteration of statehood credentials in order to become ‘real’. However, engagement in diplomatic performance need not necessarily be linked to the performance of statehood *per se*. Diplomacy can be mimicked by groups who are not seeking sovereignty but still seek to intervene in the inter-state system. Here ‘realness’ comes not necessarily in the form of stateness, but through the institutionalization of collective identity. Such is the situation in the next case study.

4. The International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem

In 1980 the state of Israel declared both East and West Jerusalem, which had been united under Israeli control during the 1967 Six Day War, to be its capital, “complete and undivided” (Basic Law, 1980, n.p.). This unilateral decision, which was contrary

to the claims by Palestinians and surrounding Arab states that East Jerusalem should remain under Arab or international control, resulted in the movement of national embassies from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv by countries anxious to avoid being seen to support this decision and thus appear partisan during peace negotiations. This diplomatic maneuver relied on the understanding of sovereignty as mutual recognition among sovereigns and played on Israel’s perceived vulnerability as a state with less-than-universal recognition. The lack of international acceptance of the newly declared capital incorporated a tacit reminder that Israel’s international legitimacy was itself contingent on the backing of a few major supporters. While seemingly a purely symbolic protest (although having material implications for day-to-day relationships between the Israeli government and ambassadors), the movement of the embassies nevertheless indicated that while Israel was *de facto* sovereign within East Jerusalem, it was not able to be so *de jure* in that territory without the assent of the dominant powers that shape international legal discourse.

While this kind of ‘high politics’ is traditionally described by realist scholars as the realm of state-sanctioned authorities, including understandings of diplomacy as the exclusive sphere of ambassadors, foreign ministries and the diplomatic cables, the revocation of diplomatic support for Israel’s decision was generally opposed by a non-state theological movement: Christian Zionism. Emphasizing the continued role of the Jews as God’s chosen people and their divinely sanctioned right to the land identified in the Bible as Canaan, Christian Zionism seeks “to give voice to that which Jesus Himself has already said; namely, that the modern-day restoration of the State of Israel is not a political accident, or merely the result of a secular, political, Zionist movement, but rather the fulfillment of God’s own Word” (ICEJ, n.d., p. 1). Christian Zionists founded their own embassy in Jerusalem in September 1980 as an act of solidarity with the Israeli people and government. The International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem (ICEJ) continues to exist today as an organization devoted to representing the interests of Christian Zionists to Israel and Israelis, with a staff of fifty at the embassy in Jerusalem and support from ICEJ branches in almost eighty countries. It is notable that ICEJ occupies the former site of the Chilean Embassy, one of the last to leave Jerusalem in 1980 and which sparked the formation of the ICEJ.⁶ Given its origins as a statement of diplomatic support for Israel and expression of recognition for Israeli sovereignty over East Jerusalem it is fitting that ICEJ styles itself as a diplomatic entity. However, in performing this identity ICEJ produces a space in which realist-inspired relations between diplomacy and sovereignty are exposed as fictive and generative of unequal power relations. Thus, ICEJ functions as the representation of a non-sovereign political constituency within the state system. The ICEJ serves a double role – (1) to affirm and recognize the state of Israel and (2) to produce the political constituency of Christian Zionists as an institutionalized geopolitical and diplomatic actor. These will each be addressed in turn.⁷

First, and as indicated earlier, ICEJ was created to mimic state practices through the recognition of Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, thus recognizing Israel itself as a sovereign actor with a particular territorialization.⁸ As ICEJ executive director Malcolm Hedding writes,

The ICEJ affirms that it is proud to be located in Jerusalem, to speak for the interests of multitudes of Christians in this regard

⁶ In an intriguing twist of fate, this building is rumored to be Edward Said’s family home (Masalha, 2007), although this may be anti-ICEJ propaganda.

⁷ This research is based on a discourse analysis of the ICEJ’s website, white papers, and other publically available documents and an interview with Len Grates, the Director of Development for ICEJ-UK (January 2010).

⁸ Although the definition of this territory is contested within the ICEJ, a common denominator is support for the 1980 annexation of Jerusalem.

from all over the world and to stand with Israel. Though not officially accredited with diplomatic status, the International Christian Embassy – Jerusalem does represent the views of millions of Christians worldwide who believe their nations should place their embassies [here](#) (2006, p. 1).

Despite not having official diplomatic sanction, ICEJ maintains a network of relationships with Israeli political factions and leaders. On one level this is very much about the personal diplomacy of Malcolm Hedding, the public ‘ambassador’ of ICEJ. As Len Grates, Director of Development for ICEJ-UK put it, “the current executive director... he has built the organization on strong relationships both in the Christian world but also in the Israeli political world. So he’s highly respected in Israel, he has regular meetings with [Israeli PM] Netanyahu” (15 January 2010). This claim to access at the highest levels of Israeli government is argued to result from the widespread and talented base of the Christian Zionist movement. Grates continues, “What the Embassy is [...] trying to do in the political world is to bring in its understanding, and its huge expertise, because within the 40 million constituents there are some serious academics” [and]...“because it’s becoming quite large and respected [the ICEJ] also has a lot of credibility,” (15 January 2010).

This mimicry of diplomatic engagement with the Israeli government is, however, incomplete and contested within Israeli domestic politics because of skepticism over ICEJ’s evangelical intentions. Therefore the mutuality of this recognition must be called into doubt. It is an uneven relationship at best. While Malcolm Hedding is invited to events because of his relationships with Netanyahu and President Peres, ICEJ has recently experienced a reduction in staff (from 70 to 50) as a result of a restriction in visas. Len Grates attributes this to the compromises of coalition government; the Shas party, which presently controls the Interior Ministry, is described as “very anti-Christian” but “fortunately the Embassy has a lot of voices, up to Netanyahu who say ‘Hey look, you can’t do this. We’re stabbing ourselves in the back if we do that,’” (15 January 2010).

The second way in which ICEJ maintains its network of relationships within Israel is through everyday practices. Because the ICEJ mandate is to provide support to Israel, it undertakes a variety of activities that attempt to build trust between Christian Zionists and Israeli Jews. This can be understood as mimicry of public diplomacy, in which geopolitical messages are conveyed directly to foreign populations. These include a partnership between ICEJ and Yad Vashem (the Israeli Holocaust Museum) in which ICEJ has set up a Christian desk at the museum to promote reconciliation between Christians and Jews, as well as an effort to raise money for the Israeli humanitarian effort in Haiti. Further, according to Len Grates ICEJ has an ‘adopt a Holocaust survivor’ program

...to just love them, in their latter days, to show them some love and care. It may just be helping them with practical things. Some of the young people work, they come to a care home and decorate it. Or they go dig some in the gardens. ... So the purpose of the Embassy is to show practical, loving compassion where the opportunity arises. (15 January 2010)

A further, latent form of diplomacy occurs during periods of conflict and war, in which volunteers from ICEJ assist in hospitals and provide other civil defense functions (short of engaging in combat). Thus, both in terms of classic, face-to-face diplomacy and of everyday, public diplomacy, ICEJ seeks to establish and nurture relationships between the Christian Zionist community around the world and the State of Israel through the mimicry of diplomatic practices.

In addition to its outward-facing recognition and support of Israel, ICEJ also serves as a way of constituting the far-flung Christian Zionist community as a geopolitical actor. Delineating two roles of the Embassy, Len Grates first argued that:

The Jews are a race and their own group of people in their own right. There’s only Jews and they only have one state in Israel, whereas the nations in the Bible are referred to as one group of people known as Gentiles. ... In some ways the Embassy represents the Gentiles as opposed to nations. (15 January 2010)

This expansive view of the ICEJ constituency includes a wide array of people who likely would not consider ICEJ to speak for them. However, elsewhere, ICEJ literature indicates the role the Embassy plays within the Christian community by arguing for a Christian Zionism that is rooted in covenant theology (e.g., Brimmer et al., 2006; Parsons, n.d.). Further, the ICEJ website (<http://www.icej.org>) mimics the form of a traditional embassy website. It streams news headlines about Israel that reflect a Christian Zionist perspective, announces Israel-based ICEJ programs and activities and provides access to white papers which set out the perspective of ICEJ on issues both geopolitical and theological. Thus, ICEJ can be understood to be producing its own constituency through its engagement with Israel; it provides a theology, an identity and an institution with which to affiliate.

It is with this performative dimension in mind that Len Grates’s other description of ICEJ’s constituency can be best understood:

I guess [ICEJ is] looking at the large Christian community worldwide. ... that is spread right across the globe; as I said there are 86 national offices, so it’s the opposite to a standard embassy. A country sends out embassies to many countries. Whereas the Christian Embassy – many countries are supporting one embassy in Israel. (15 January 2010)

Indeed, just as ICEJ is networked with Israeli politics and society, it is constituted by a network of national organizations that are operationally separate from ICEJ. For example, ICEJ-UK is a limited liability company whose domestic activities include confronting anti-Semitism and helping Jews in the UK, promoting Christian Zionism vis-à-vis replacement theology (in which God’s promises to the Jews are transferred to the Christian Church following the resurrection of Jesus) and supporting Aliyah (an organization that helps fund Jews who wish to move to Israel).

Of course the most important aspect of the national organization is its fund-raising for ICEJ. As Len Grates put it:

We help to fund the Embassy too – it’s a big building. They don’t get anything from within Israel so it’s funded from international donations so that’s part of the work as well, support. ... we send it out there and they spend it as they need to use it. (15 January 2010)

Beyond the financial dimension, the executive board of ICEJ is composed primarily of national directors who are elected periodically to reflect geographic diversity and also the demographics (and donations) of Christian Zionism. The United States is almost always represented on the board, and Sweden and Norway often feature as a result of their donation levels. As Len Grates explained,

The Embassy wouldn’t exist without the international support, so there’s a mutual appreciation of that and on important matters all the national directors would be consulted, because I think there is this sensitivity that we are representing Christians in Brazil, the UK, in America, Australia, China...and so there are different sensitivities that are brought into the mix. (15 January 2010)

In summary, the ICEJ is similar to the TGIE in that it mimics diplomatic practices in order to gain the legitimacy through which to intervene in the world of ‘formal’ inter-state politics. However, the ICEJ differs from the TGIE in two major ways. First, while it seeks to intervene in the realm of territorial politics through its advocacy for Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, it seeks no territory, or

sovereignty, of its own. It therefore does not meet the criteria for 'paradiplomacy', and must be considered as something related to but distinct from those practices. However, it should be noted that non-sovereign religious diplomacy has a long history beyond this example, with one of the earliest types of diplomatic representative in Europe being the Apocrisarius, an ecclesiastical envoy (Neumann *in press*). Second, while the TGiE has past links to stateness and Tibetan nationalism, the ICEJ is an attempt to create something anew – a geopolitical actor to not just represent, but *constitute*, Christian Zionism on a global scale. In other words, the performance of diplomacy is itself productive of something in need of representation; the flows of money and organizational network of the ICEJ provide an infrastructure through which Christian Zionism exists, acts and is identifiable. The final case study similarly plays with questions of self-constitution through the mimicry of diplomacy, but returns to the sovereign state as a model, albeit one to be engaged with through irony.

5. The diplomacy of micropatrias

Similar to the TGiE in their quest for recognized sovereignty, and to the ICEJ in their attempts to constitute legitimate geopolitical actors and networks, micropatrias (such as the Democratic Republic of Bobalania or the Sovereign Kingdom of Kemetia) are self-declared nations that mimic and in many ways parody established sovereign nation-states. Micropatrias are spaces where forms of humor and seriousness intertwine and entangle to allow for playful and critical approaches to sovereignty through national representations and diplomatic performances. These representations and performances vary along a continuum of functions, intents and styles in terms of the explicit and implicit expressions of humor, seriousness, playfulness and criticality. The micropatrial examples discussed here are meant to capture different points along this continuum. Crucially, the importance of such mimetic performances is not in offering "a model for the future but as a reflection on the present" (Steinberg et al., 2011, p. 14), with reflection being an 'articulation of ideas' that comment upon and are critical of the 'norms' (Steinberg et al., 2011, p. 3).

Generally, micropatrias claim sovereignty based on the 1933 Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States. The Montevideo Convention stresses declaration as the basis for sovereignty and statehood, needless of constitution from any outside international actors or other states. Spatially, micropatrias are enclaved by 'host' states, most notably the United Kingdom (UK), the United States and Australia. The micropatrias discussed here are enclaves within the UK as 'host'. Appropriating power representationally, micropatrial enclaves engage in 'formal' diplomacy through their mimetic performances to reinforce their declared status and to challenge 'conventional' recognition of sovereignty.

Paradoxically, micropatrias take issue with, and yet mimetically rely on and reproduce, hegemonic norms of sovereignty and diplomacy. This reliance on and reproduction of international norms by micropatrias highlights the stark binary between sanctioned, state-centric diplomatic actors and mimetic practices of non-state actors at the margins. The 'representational force' (Mattern, 2005) of micropatrial diplomatic approaches targets two distinct audiences and performs in two overarching ways. First, to reinforce their declared status, enclaved micropatrias typically send word to the host via a letter. Even if such practices are stereotyped or even misrepresented, this mimicking of formal approaches to opening channels of diplomacy 'tests the waters' of response (or non-response) of enclaving sovereign nation-states. Autonomous representations of micropatria and micropatrial perspectives on host responses are discussed below as 'inter-diplomacy'. Second, framed here as 'intra-diplomacy', micropatrial communications with each other

lend agency to their diplomatic performances.⁹ Inter-diplomacy with the host 'community' and intra-diplomacy within the micropatrial 'community' are each discussed in turn below.

The mimetic performance of inter-diplomacy is the representational force generated by declaring a micropatrial 'sovereign' through interaction with an established sovereign nation-state and/or international community. Inter-diplomacy by micropatrias within the UK usually takes the form of a letter sent by a micropatrial representative to a local council, the Prime Minister, the Lord Chancellor, the Queen of England, or even the United Nations (UN). The performance of inter-diplomacy by micropatrias produces their declared status and represented autonomy, yet the need to communicate with others to (re)produce this autonomy illustrates the desire for some form of recognition.

In return, the UK as host and the UN as international community typically either do not respond (refusing to recognize), respond in an aggressive manner (implying criminality), or respond politely via either an acknowledged receipt of letter (automated protocol) or referring the micropatria to another department (refusing responsibility). These responses could easily be considered failed diplomacy between recognized (official) and unrecognized (unofficial) diplomatic actors illustrating the existing binary between state-centric and marginal performances and the exclusion of the latter, yet micropatrias envisage such responses as victories. Each type of (non)response is considered in turn through specific examples concerning micropatrial experiences and how these (non)responses are viewed as victories of recognition.

First, the host response of refusal to recognize by not responding to communication from the micropatrial enclave is regarded as an acceptance of the declared autonomy of micropatrias, such as when King Danny I of the Kingdom of Lovely delivered his declaration of independence to the UK government. After waiting some time for a response – and as a humorous performance – he stated, "So far I haven't heard any news so I guess that everything is okay" (Wallace, 2005, n.p.). Second, by implying criminality as a response and reacting in an aggressive manner, the host creates opportunity for opposition through legal debates over whether micropatrial citizens are bound by UK laws. As a more serious example along the continuum, this is illustrated by the Principality of Sealand's court case which resulted from shots fired at the British Navy. In the end, the Principality of Sealand was declared outside of UK jurisdiction (PS, 1968). Third, when the host issues a letter as response, whether via the automated protocol of acknowledging receipt of correspondence or refusal of responsibility by way of naming another department as the correct contact, the micropatria perceives this as recognition of their declaration. The Crown Dependency of Forvik repeatedly experiences the polite acknowledgment of letters while being passed to other governmental departments. Since no authority has directly confronted the Crown Dependency of Forvik's declared status or prosecuted the leader for non-compliance of laws or non-payment of taxes, the latter views itself as not under UK rules and regulations. As the leader of the Crown Dependency of Forvik stated in regards to response versus non-response, "it's a win-win situation" (Stuart Hill, personal interview, September 2010). While these (non)responses can be dismissed as non-recognition, therefore lending no legitimacy to the declared sovereignty of the micropatria, they nevertheless make transparent the esoteric quality of recognized conventional sovereignty.

Intra-diplomacy, by contrast, is diplomacy *among* micropatrial sovereigns and *within* micropatrial communities. Examples include the establishment of embassies, internet forums, the signing of treaties, personal contact (visits, emails and letters, gifts), micropa-

⁹ Heavily digital in representation, the majority of this research took place on-line, via archives, active embassies, and personal emails. However, more traditional forms of contact such as posted mail and diplomatic international visits also occurred.

trial leagues, international events such as a Micronational Olympics, and cooperation across borders such as joint ventures in space programs. For purposes of brevity, two mimetic examples will be considered here: first, diplomacy of embassies and consulates as transnational performances; and second, diplomacy of international organizations as multilateral performances.

As a function of diplomacy, embassies and consulates reify the diplomatic community and, accordingly, recognized sovereignty. The 138 pages of the *London Diplomatic List* (2010) published by the *British Foreign and Commonwealth Office* aid in supporting this claim by cataloging the hundreds of members of the London Diplomatic Corps and their sovereign associations. Diplomatic outlets, such as these, are also important to the representational force of micropatrias. Such diplomatic representations further play with notions of sovereignty and diplomacy. With regards to sovereign host (non)responses, micropatrial mimesis comments upon current diplomatic and statecraft conventions and their exclusionary practices. Yet, micropatrial engagement allows for a platform that challenges and questions taken-for-granted geopolitical constructions as non-state actors that at the same time mimic, and therefore reify, the systematic practices of sovereignty and diplomacy. As an example, the Principality of Paulovia, which has 49 consulates throughout the world, claims its diplomacy aims to “Promote and support international and local charities, relief organizations, environmental, health and education organizations and programs, emergency aid appeals and campaigns among [sic] citizens and non-citizens alike in their region. . . . This is the key role of the Diplomatic Corps” (PP, 2010, n.p.). Micropatrial consulates and embassies such as these are thus symbolic and represent a layering and complicating of space. The layering of alternative networks of formal diplomacy onto the hegemony of state-centric ones in turn complicates political geographies and the ‘natural’ and static (or discretely bounded) qualities of such state-centric channels of contact. Such symbolism is an intra-diplomatic function of mutual recognition of efforts in pursuit of shared micropatrial values. Ambassadors who represent these consulates and embassies are further agreeing to promote the micropatria and its principles across an international parallel network. These mimetic practices call into question the exclusive recognition and legitimization of sovereignty and diplomacy.

In addition, and as a result of practices of intra-diplomacy, micropatrias collectively produce digital international communities in which member nations share concerns, consider possibilities and practice statehood. The function of such organizations is recognition of sovereign claims via diplomatic representation and digital communication. The League of Secessionist States, for instance, “exists to promote intermicronational communication and partnership, and serves to act as a *supramicronational*, impartial Body where such a need for one may exist” (LoSS, 2010, n.p., emphasis original). Another example is the Organization of Active Micronations, which works to “maintain micronational peace and security” as well as implement “recognition of sovereignty and legitimacy of government of every member micronation” (OAM, 2010, n.p.). These non-state representations challenge the right to diplomatic agency under the banner of declared sovereignty. Such parallel entities paradoxically make transparent the exclusionary practices of conventional state-centric diplomacy while reproducing the very structure of hegemonically constructed sovereignty and diplomacy. While as noted earlier, micropatrias cite the Montevideo Convention which defines external recognition as superfluous, micropatrias ironically seek recognition through inter- and intra-diplomatic means.

Micropatrial national representations and diplomatic mimetic performances highlight hegemonic constructions of sovereignty and diplomacy and, as a result, challenge the exclusionary nature of recognized sovereigns and international organizations. By creating enclaves within hosts, micropatrial diplomacy works dynam-

cally to emphasize the pragmatic and complex spatial layers that exist and are often hidden behind the hegemony of (non)recognition. Through their autonomous declarations and inter-diplomacy, micropatrias denaturalize membership in international communities and the recognition of sovereignty. Meanwhile, micropatrial citizens, tactically employing autonomous representations and expressions of agency, transform into unofficial geopolitical actors. Via these diplomatic performances, micropatrias play with the normative spatialities of sovereignty. The performance of sovereignty and the numerous tactics of diplomatic communication by micropatrias make transparent the exclusionary practices embedded in the ‘conventional’ international system. Micropatrias open up space for subversive responses and expressions to sovereign impositions and norms. As anomalous political geographies, micropatrias create spaces in which dialog on the taken-for-granted can begin to question the practices and performances of recognized sovereign states.

6. Non-state actors and the mimicry of diplomacy

The three case studies described above demonstrate how diplomatic representations are not only strategic hegemonic tools employed by constituted powers to exclude, but can also be tactically performed by entities that challenge the composition and status of the interstate system. In thereby “question[ing] the classic notion of international relations as a domain reserved for states” (Aldecoa, 1999, p. 89), such cases fundamentally transgress the inside/outside binary of international politics and shine a spotlight on the role of contingency in the untidy discursive production of international recognition, sovereignty and legitimacy. Drawing on Bhabha’s work, these spaces of diplomatic mimicry can be imagined as remainders, left over and left behind as the ‘legitimate’ international system is continually constituted. It is their *excess* that provides the constitutive outside to the diplomatic realm. Even as their existence threatens that system, the system relies on them for representational force to reify systematic norms. In turn, “this suggests too the possibility of other analytical frameworks [. . .] beyond the presence or absence of undifferentiated sovereign power, towards a contextual understanding of different regimes, apparatus, expressions and representations of sovereignty” (Sidaway, 2003, p. 174).

However, while these cases show the ambivalent systemic results of adopting diplomatic discourses and practices, they also illustrate the representational power that can be tapped into through those discourses and practices. For TGiE, diplomacy is used to maintain a veneer of state legitimacy in the absence of territorial jurisdiction or international recognition. For ICEJ, diplomacy is employed to intervene in classic geopolitical questions of state recognition and territory and also to institutionalize a minority concern (Christian Zionism) within global Christianity. For micropatrias, diplomacy provides a conduit of representational power that can be appropriated during acts of self-constitution and ironic critique.

However, these case studies cannot be wholly collapsed into a singular ‘alternative diplomacy’, as they each speak to different orientations vis-à-vis the state and international politics. First, with regard to the state, TGiE is marked by its enactment of a significant degree of stateness. In closely mimicking state practices, TGiE is striving to play the ‘state game’, and diplomacy is a key part of that effort. As such, this case encourages us to think of statehood not as a restrictive legal concept but as relative with different entities meeting the criteria for international statehood to greater or lesser degree (Clapham, 1998). Micropatrias occupy the middle ground on the spectrum of stateness, adopting the language of states but doing so in a playful fashion that engages in ironic mimicry. Through their subversive parodying of sovereign diplomatic practices, micropatrial playfulness aims to challenge taken-for-granted constructions of sovereignty. Meanwhile, at the other end of the spectrum the ICEJ

adopts the language of stateness but explicitly refuses any aspirations to sovereignty. The ICEJ's loose mimicry embraces its own excess, even as it hopes to intervene in inter-state politics. More generally, we argue that these cases demonstrate how aspects of statecraft are emulated and practiced by actors outside of the recognized world of sovereign states. As the discussion above illustrates, it is often not sufficient for non-state actors to 'only' engage in public diplomacy. In order to attempt to construct an international personality and a degree of legitimacy within the international community, such polities also strive to imitate formal and official diplomatic practices and institutions because it is the establishment of a pseudo embassy, organization of parliamentary exchanges and formation of multilateral organizations which are perceived as key leverages of power. As such, noting the different outcomes sought by these cases, the TGiE could be argued to be rehearsing statecraft, while ICEJ strategically employs state-like practices and micropatrias are playfully mocking statecraft.

Second, with regard to the degree of engagement with international politics, the ordering of the spectrum is slightly different. Again, TGiE occupies the first position as, with its *raison d'être* of seeking genuine autonomy for the territory of Tibet, it seeks to directly engage with and put its case to recognized governments and major intergovernmental organizations. In the middle ground on this spectrum is ICEJ, which exists to engage in the realm of international politics but does so with a focus on Israel. Finally, micropatrias imaginatively occupy the far-end of the spectrum, as their playful engagement with international politics is often a matter of intra-diplomacy including personal treaties, pacts or disputes among micropatria sovereigns. Even at this end of the spectrum, however, humor and irony must be understood as something not antonymic to serious representation, but a representational force in and of itself, and an extension of the serious. Embedded within this playfulness is serious critique: of states, their bureaucracies and the ritual pomp of their diplomacy.

The variety of these unofficial diplomacies indicates that more empirical investigation into non-state diplomacy is necessary, in particular to examine the unequal power relationships that current emphases in the literature on diplomacy produce. An obvious first line of enquiry would be to further engage with how such cases of unofficial diplomacy "move us beyond profitless debates as to who are and who are not significant actors in world politics" (Hocking, 1999, p. 21). By blurring the boundaries of 'traditional' definitions of state and non-state players, the examples highlighted here pose important questions as to the "definition of international actorness and the relationships between differing categories of actor" (Hocking, 1999, p. 18; Kuus, 2008). Moreover, by collapsing conventional notions of the 'official and proper' conduits of statecraft, these cases disrupt diplomatic performances of the state. However, rather than calling for a dismantling of the state, such appropriation of these same forms of representation reconceptualize issues of agency and actorness and highlight the pragmatic and heterogeneous constructions of folded international space. This multiplicity of 'international' spaces takes the form of seemingly incommensurable worlds: the 'official' international realm of nation-states; the non-territorial polities that claim some form of legitimacy in that realm; and the micropatrias that compose a parallel international state system simultaneous to the more well-known UN system. Nevertheless, these seemingly incommensurable spaces are folded in on, brushing up alongside and drawing representational power from one another. Together they form an assemblage of 'diplomacy' that must be considered in its totality.

Second, while an emphasis can and should be developed on the practices of 'alternative' diplomats, it is important to also examine the communicative qualities of diplomacy (Gilboa, 2002) and the variety of ways in which traditional geopolitical actors receive messages from them. This is hinted at especially in the case study

of micropatrias, which generate much of their representational power from the ways in which host states respond (or do not) to communicative acts. Providing a heretofore unexamined connection between the diplomacy literature and that of audience studies (Dittmer and Dodds, 2008), unofficial diplomacies offer up new possibilities for studying the sending, and receiving, of diplomatic messages. Such attention to practices of listening and interpretation might entail ethnography of mundane embassy/embassy translation and office work, or it could take the form of archival research into past high-level communications.

Finally, recent research themes within political geography both speak to, and could be enriched by, investigations of diplomatic practice as discussed above. These include work on foreign policy analysis (Dodds, 1993; Mercille, 2008), research on the practices and trajectories of geopolitical elites (Kuus, 2008; Müller, 2008) and emerging work on formal politics within the geopolitical margins (Agnew, 2010; McConnell, 2009). Indeed, as we have demonstrated through our empirical snapshots, a focus on unofficial diplomacies is revealing in important ways. Not only does this focus begin to respond to calls to re-engage with practical geopolitics (Dalby, 2010; Kelly, 2006), but, following the argument that the abnormal has something to tell us about the normal, attending to articulations of formal diplomacy in 'unusual' places exposes the contingent practices that underlie political power in so-called 'conventional' states.

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